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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

Top Secret

c 196

28 February 1970

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Approved For Release 2003/01/29 : CIA-RDP79T00975A015700020002-4

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USSR - Middle East: Moscow has increased its efforts to dissuade the US from giving Israel additional military aircraft.

A Pravda article on 26 February, citing a recent CBS news report that Washington's decision was positive, charged that this was intended to prepare world opinion for a new arms deal that will "whip up the flames of conflict" in the Middle East. The author also asserted that the US is using the protective shield of propaganda surrounding the crash of a Swissair jetliner as the prelude to announcing officially that it would supply new weapons to Israel. The tone of the article, a highly unusual reaction by the Soviets to a news report on such a sensitive matter, marks another Moscow effort to forestall a US decision to supply Israel with additional aircraft.

Moscow's uncompromising public stand on the Middle East has been accompanied by additional evidence that the Soviets are prepared to give the Arabs new arms supplies.

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